A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING

AT

WHITE-HALL,

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BY

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A Lent-Sermon.

Rom. VIII. Ver. 13.

If you walk after the flesh, ye shall die; but if you through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, you shall live.

IT was the Apostles design in most part of this Epistle, both for his Converts at *Rome*, to whom it was immediately written, and for all other Christians that should come to read it in after times, to draw them off from a carnal and sensual course of life, to that which is most agreeable to our Christian profession.

In order to this, he lays the foundation of

his Diſcourſe in a diſcovery of a two-fold principle in man, that ſtrongly enclines him the one way or the other: he ſhews the certain tendency of both theſe ways; the one expoſing us to the juſt wrath and indignation of God, which muſt end firſt or laſt in our ruine and deſtruction; the other pleaſing to God, and beneficial to our ſelves, full of inward peace and comfort in this life, ſure of endleſs joy and happineſs in the future.

Theſe two oppoſite principles in my Text, ſo much ſpoken of in the beginning of this Chapter, are the ſame which our Saviour formerly mentioned in that diſcourſe, St. *John* 3. 6. where he ſhews what they are, and whence they proceed.

There is a principle of *Fleſh* (as he calls it) in every man that is born into this world; it deſcends to us from the parents of our fleſh, in that taint of our nature which we call *Original Sin*; and this addicts us to all Carnal and Senſual things, but more ſtrongly to thoſe which are evil and forbidden. There is alſo another principle in every Chriſtian, the Grace which we receive at our New Birth in Holy Baptiſm: This our Saviour calls *Spirit*, for 'tis infus'd into us by the operation of the Spirit of God.

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This inclines (and inables those that will be led by it) to those things which are spiritual and eternal. The opposition between these two principles in us, and the consequence of each to them that are led by it, is thus described by the Apostle in my Text, *If ye*, &c.

That is, in other words, If you lead your life according to the Carnal Principle, and be not chang'd and renew'd by the Spirit, *i. e.* until you repent and be converted, you are spiritually dead in this life, and are to look for nothing but eternal death in the future. But if the Spiritual Principle have power in you, so as to subdue the irregular inclinations of the flesh, *you shall live*, i. e. being quicken'd and renew'd by the Spirit, you shall have that spiritual life here which shall be consummated hereafter in life everlasting.

In the last words which are my subject at this time, I shall consider these four particulars.

1. What are here call'd the *deeds of the flesh*.
2. How these are to be *mortifi'd*.
3. How we are to do it *by the Spirit*.
4. How thus doing *we shall live*.

All these parts I shall consider with a twofold respect.

To them that have ſpiritual life, and to them that are deſtitute of it; for thoſe of both ſorts have an intereſt in my Text, and a capacity to receive benefit by it.

You that have Spiritual Life in you, *if you mortifie the deeds of the fleſh*, you ſhall continue the life of Grace here, and ſhall attain to the life of Glory hereafter.

And even you that are ſpiritually dead, you are not ſo dead but that you alſo may live; *if you by the ſpirit mortifie the deeds of the fleſh*; you ſhall thereby come to the life of Grace here, and ſo you alſo ſhall attain the life of Glory hereafter.

To proceed in the method which I have propounded, I am firſt to conſider what are the *Deeds of the fleſh*. And if the fleſh be, as is ſaid, our original Concupiſcence, then the deeds or actings of it muſt be actual ſins. So that look how many ſorts of ſuch ſins are in the world, ſo many ſorts we may reckon of the *Deeds of the fleſh*. Our Apoſtle gives us a black Catalogue of them, *Gal.* 5. 19. where he ſays, *The works of the fleſh are manifeſt, and they are theſe, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wraths, Strifes, Seditions, Hereſies, Envying,*

ing, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings and ſuch like; which whoſo does, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God. And leſt our Apoſtle's calling them *Works* in that Text, and *Deeds* in this, ſhould make any one think, he means only outward actions, and no other; I muſt deſire you to remember, that God ſees not as man ſees, nor judges as man judges. Man can ſee no more but the outward action, God looks chiefly, if not only at the heart; man can judge of no ſin till he ſees it acted, with God it is acted as ſoon as it is conceiv'd. *When luſt hath conceiv'd, it brings forth ſin; and ſin when it is finiſh'd, brings forth death*, James 1. 15. 'Tis conceiv'd as ſoon as ever it is thought of with conſent; as we proceed to delight in the ſpeculation, it ripens; when we reſolve to commit it, then 'tis finiſh'd; for then the heart has done as much as it can do. Though we never proceed to action, 'tis perfect ſin. I cannot ſay it is more ſin if we do bring it to action. Only then 'tis the more dangerous, and approaches more to habit; for the purpoſe continues all the while we commit it, and is confirmed by the pleaſure we have in committing it. Therefore 'tis the great mercy of God when he reſtrains us, when he hinders us, when he takes away the power and opportunity

tunity from us, that we cannot put an ill purpoſe in execution: though we are nevertheleſs guilty of the ſin, having gone as far as we can go in it, when it is fully reſolv'd and purpos'd in the heart. *Mat.* 15. 19. ſays our Saviour, *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, falſe Witneſs, Blaſphemy.* They could not proceed out of the heart, but that firſt they were in the heart. And many ſins may be in the heart, that are never brought forth into action. All the ſins that I have mentioned may lie within in the heart, and only thoſe come abroad that ſee their occaſion; but whether outward or inward, they are the *works of the fleſh*, they are the ſame ſins whether purpoſed and committed, or whether never committed, but only purpos'd and determin'd in the heart.

Theſe we are to *mortifie*, ſays my Text: To mortifie, that is, to kill them, to put them to death; or, which is equivalent, yea much better, to keep them from ever coming to life.

This mortifying of ſin, is the proper work and buſineſs of Repentance: now Repentance (ye know) runs throughout the whole courſe of ones life: every day of our life has need of repentance, for no day is free from the polluti-

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on of ſin. But through Gods mercy in Chriſt, ſin ſhall not be imputed to them in whom it is mortified or ſubdued and kept under, in whom the power of it is conquered and kill'd, or in whom 'tis kept from coming to life.

I endeavour to uſe ſo many ſeveral terms, as may reach the ſeveral ſtates of men, which I have to conſider.

The firſt ſtate is of them that are not yet grown up to years of diſcretion, that cannot yet fully diſtinguiſh between good and evil; they are to *mortifie ſin*, (I cannot properly call it repentance) that have not yet ſoil'd the white robe of Innocence which they put on through Gods Grace in the Sacrament of Baptiſm.

The ſecond ſtate is of them who having broke their Baptiſmal profeſſion, and having fallen into ſin, through ignorance and frailty, have not yet proceeded ſo far as to have defil'd themſelves by any wilful or deliberate ſin.

The third ſtate is of them who have thus tranſgreſſed, and yet not gone to that height of enormity, as to commit any ſin againſt the light of nature, ſuch as God has particularly threatned with excision; and have not yet contracted any habitual cuſtom of thoſe ſins into which they have fallen.

The fourth ſtate is of them who having done

thus are therefore ſaid to be ſpiritually dead The Queſtion is, what men in each of theſe ſtates have to do in the work of Repentance? how in each of theſe ſtates they are to *mortifie the deeds of the fleſh*?

Firſt of them that are not yet grown up to years of diſcretion, children that can ſcarce diſtinguiſh between good and evil; the queſtion is, what they have to do in this work? ſure there is much to be done by their Parents and Governours. 'Tis their duty to forwarn them of ſin; to make them know their danger of it, and by it; to teach them, as they are able to learn, what ſolemn Vows and Profeſſions were made for them in Baptiſm. The firſt promiſe then made for them was, *that they ſhould forſake the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this world, and all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh.* Children ſhould be taught what theſe things are; how hard it is to forſake them, through the naughtineſs of our natural diſpoſition; and yet how neceſſary 'tis to forſake them, and how poſſible through the Grace and Goodneſs of God. Children ſhould be taught in their daily prayers, to acknowledge what they find of their ignorance and frailty, to ask pardon for what has been amiſs in their little time paſt, and to beg the aſſiſtance of Gods Grace for the future.

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Whenſoever they do fall into actual ſin, as ſoon as ever it comes to the knowledge of their friends, 'tis their duty to admoniſh them, and to make them ſenſible of it; to make them aſhamed of it, and ſorry for it; To bring them, if it be poſſible, to hate and deteſt it; To ſee that they Confeſs it to God, and ask his pardon for that ſin and all other; that they reſolve by promiſe to forſake it, and beſeech God for his Grace to enable them to fulfil that good reſolution.

In the whole courſe of our life after Infancy, being obnoxious to many and manifold ſins; ſome of Ignorance, ſome of Weakneſs, and ſome of Wilfulneſs and Preſumption; and none of theſe being to be forgiven without Repentance; we ought, as far as we know and are able, to ſuit our Repentance to our Sins.

For ſins of Ignorance, and of daily Incurſion, I conceive a general Repentance may ſuffice: for ſins of Wilfulneſs and Preſumption, there ought to be a particular Repentance.

Firſt, for ſins of Weakneſs and daily Incurſion, I ſay, 'tis neceſſary there ſhould be a general Repentance. Every one that has the uſe of knowledge and reaſon, ſhould make ſuch a daily Confeſſion in his Prayers, as *David* did in

that *Pſalm* 19, 12. *Cleanſe me Lord from my ſecret ſins.* This our Church has taught us to do in our publick Prayers; and we ſhould do it as oft as we repeat that Confeſſion; *Almighty and moſt merciful Father, we have offended againſt thy holy Laws, doing thoſe things which we ought not to have done, and not doing thoſe things which we ought to have done.* In this and ſuch like offices, we ſum up together our ſins of Ignorance and daily Incurſion; we caſt our ſelves, with them, before the Tribunal of God; imploring that Mercy, which according to the terms of the Goſpel, we are ſure he will grant to them that confeſs in the general thoſe ſins which they know not in particular. In this ſenſe I conceive thoſe words may be underſtood, 1 *John* 1. 9. *We*, ſays the Apoſtle of himſelf, and ſuch as he was, *cannot ſay that we have no ſin:* We have ſins of Ignorance, and of daily incurſion; but bleſſed be God, *if we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and will forgive us*, according to the terms of the Goſpel.

As for thoſe ſins which need a particular Repentance, of them, ſays the ſame Apoſtle, *he that abides in God, ſinneth not*, 1 John 3. 6. and *ver.* 9. *He does not commit ſin*, he does not fall into wilful and deliberate ſin. If he does, there is a breach,

breach, and he muſt ſpeedily make it up by particular repentance for that particular ſin. Good God! how many ſuch ſins do many of us commit, and paſs them by without particular notice, and therefore without particular Repentance? they do not remember themſelves, and are as quiet as if God had forgotten them.

Becauſe this happens too oft, and cannot be helpt when 'tis paſt; I muſt mind them that are ſenſible of it, how much they are oblig'd to ſpecial and ſolemn acts of Repentance. This God will ſurely expect, and leſs will not be accepted at their hands; that they ſhould ſet apart ſome ſpecial times for their ſpiritual accompt, and eſpecially when they would prepare to receive the Lords Supper. All Chriſtians are oblig'd to receive at *Eaſter*, according to the ancient Laws yet in force. When thoſe Laws were firſt made in the Primitive Church, care was taken there ſhould be a time of preparation: and (I ſuppoſe for this purpoſe) it was wiſely ordain'd, that there ſhould be not only a whole Lent of Abſtinence, but a Week of Faſting; the Paſſion Week, in which men, as it were, with one common conſent, not to interrupt and hinder one another, might ſet themſelvs to examine the ſtate of their Conſcience, to mortifie their Luſts, and correct

their evil Habits, to purge out the old Leaven before they come to the Feaſt of that Sacrament. What care the Church has taken for this, we ought our ſelves to take for all our other preparations; to ſet apart Sufficient time for the cleanſing of the Conſcience. To ſay how much is Sufficient, I ſhall not undertake, for the meaſures are various according to mens ſeveral circumſtances: Of them that have much time, much will be requir'd; and leſs will be ſufficient for them that have leſs: But I beſeech you let the thing be effectually done. Call your ſelf into your Chamber or Cloſet, and there, as the Pſalmiſt ſays, *Commune with your own heart and be ſtill.* Examine your ſelf wherein you have tranſgreſs'd, and wherein you have been moſt apt to tranſgreſs, eſpecially in thoſe things which are your fouleſt tranſgreſſions. Search as far as you are able into the very particulars of them: where you have forgot the particulars, yet at leaſt, to remember the kinds of them. The kinds of every ones ſins are known to himſelf: The kinds wherein men may ſin are infinite, and yet theſe may be reduc'd under certain Heads; and are ſo in ſome Books to which you may have recourſe, in this duty of Self-examination. If you have not ſuch a Catalogue

talogue of Heads (which were well worth the having and considering at such a time) you may do well to think deliberately with your selves what you know that God has commanded in Scripture, and what you know that God has forbidden in Scripture; and examine your self how you have done those things which God has commanded, and avoided what God has forbidden. Especially

If you know any Catalogue in Scripture, either of Commands and Duties, or of Prohibitions and Sins; you may do well to examine your self by that Catalogue, and to consider what the state of your soul is as to every Particular. For example, you know the Ten Commandments of the Moral Law; you may take a particular account of your obedience to those Commands. You know the three Theological Virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity; examine the state of your soul as to these three Graces and Virtues. You may possibly have observ'd sundry Catalogues of sins; I quoted you one in *Gal.* 5. 19. you find there how God threatens all them that are guilty of such sins, you may do well to ask your selves with the Apostles, *Is it I?* and see what answer you can make upon each of those Particulars.

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To do juſt as I adviſe in this matter, I know is not ſo abſolutely neceſſary; for the ſame thing may be effected ſundry ways: but this way is the beſt that I am able to adviſe, and I am ſure the thing might be profitably done: I queſtion how faithful they are to themſelves that leave it undone.

The uſe of this advice is, as far as 'tis poſſible, to find out the particulars; at leaſt to find out the kinds of your ſins. That having found you may mortifie them; bring them forth one by one in Confeſſion, and recount them to God in the bitterneſs of your ſoul; and take up ſtrong reſolutions againſt them, beſeeching God by his Grace, to enable you to fulfil thoſe reſolutions.

Yet when all this is done, I cannot ſay you have mortified your ſin, till you have truly forſaken it, and at leaſt broke the Habit of it. This is true Mortification, when the ſin is caſt off and forſaken; when the luſt, the parent of it is ſo conquer'd and ſubdued, that though ſtill it dwell in us (we cannot help that) yet it hath no more dominion over us.

But what ſhall we ſay when the ſin is not forſaken, when luſt is in full dominion, when Religion and the fear of God is ſo abandon'd and loſt,

loſt, that one does not ſtick at thoſe Sins which the Gentiles, that have onely the Light of Nature, would have deteſted and abhorr'd? Or when one allows himſelf in the Habitual Practiſe of that which he knows to be Sin, or might know, if he would but conſider it? In this Caſe, the Perſon being ſpiritually dead, (which is the fourth and laſt State) I am to ſhow how ſuch an one may yet *mortifie the Deeds of the Fleſh*, (that is) may recover from this Death, and ſo ſcape Eternal Death; which is the next thing that falls under conſideration.

And ſurely this Eſtate being extraordinary bad, is not to be remedied without extraordinary Care. Luſt, where it has got an Head, where it has the Dominion, is like that Unclean Spirit, *Mat.* xvii. 21. that was not to be caſt out without *Prayer and Faſting*. Without *Prayer* there is nothing to be done in any ſpiritual Buſineſs; eſpecially in this, there is need of moſt intent and moſt vehement Prayer. And there is need of *Faſting* too, that is, of much Severity to be exerciſed upon our ſelves: and that not onely in Abſtinence from Meats, which of it ſelf, St. *Paul* ſays, *profits little*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. but we are chiefly to abſtain from the ſatisfying of our Luſts in thoſe things which are more to

us than Meat and Drink. This being as much the hardeſt, as moſt needful Severity; our Saviour calls it, *The plucking out of the Right Eye, the cutting off a Limb*, Mat. v. 30. St. *Paul* calls it, *The Circumciſion of the Heart*, Rom. ii. 19. and *Gal.* v. 24. *The crucifying of the Fleſh, with its Affections and Luſts.*

I know 'tis in vain to proceed upon this Subject, to ſhow how a Man ſpiritually dead, ſhould mortifie ſin; how one dead in any kind, ſhould do any act of life in that kind; much more, to excite you with great Coſt and Pains to endeavour it; unleſs firſt I ſhow that you are capable to do it: for no Man that thinks what he does, will ſet about, much leſs be at great coſt to do, that which he thinks impoſſible to be done.

Therefore, ere I go any farther, I ſhall endeavour to ſhow, how he that is ſpiritually dead may mortifie Sin, and what is to be done on his part towards the mortifying of it.

I truſt you underſtand what is moſt certainly true; that as there is no Man wholly free from Luſt, ſo there is no Man entirely under the Dominion of it. That Devil is not ſo great in any Man living, that he can quite put out the Eyes, or ſtop the Mouth of his Conſcience: Nay, he cannot hinder it from obſerving, and ſpeaking out,

out, and interrupting him between whiles. No Habit is ſo deeply radicated in us, ſo entirely poſſeſt of us, but that it may be broken off, it may be alter'd by degrees, and turn'd quite into the contrary, as we may order the matter.

That ill Habits may be alter'd we know, and by what Cauſes; as by Diet and Phyſick; by Education and Converſe; by diligent Exerciſe, whether for ones Moral Improvement, or whether out of any other Deſign.

We know Men may be extremely changed, for we ſee by experience they are ſo. It were no hard thing to ſhew by Examples, ſome that have been in their time Laviſh, Riotous, Spendthrifts, and come after to be Greedy, Sordid, Penurious Wretches. Some that were Diſſolute and Looſe, without appearance of any Senſe of Religion, have in time come to be Superſtitious, Schiſmatical, and Factious. Such as have been factious in their Sect of Religion, having afterward found that to be a Cheat, and judging all Religion to be ſo, have turn'd Ranters, and run out into all manner of Licentiouſneſs. Some that have much valu'd Themſelves by their Cloaths, and taken a Pride to out-do others that way, becoming Quakers have put

off that Pride, and put on Spiritual Pride in the ſtead. 'Tis Luſt governs them ſtill, though it has ſhifted it ſelf; it hath alter'd its Habit, it hath quitted its Place, and put on other Circumſtances; 'tis no other than Satan that has caſt out Satan. However this ſufficiently ſhows how poſſible it is for a Habit to be broken and left off, and turn'd into the contrary. Being ſure then it is poſſible, we are to ſee how this may be done to good purpoſe in the way of Mortification.

It may be done Morally, as I intimated before: So Heathens have done it, and ſo the Spiritually Dead may do it, Morally, by attending to the Dictates of Natural Reaſon.

Common Reaſon will tell you what a weakneſs it is to give the Reins to your Luſt, to let your Beaſt carry you whither he pleaſes; to run out of your Eſtate, your Credit, your Health, in purſuit of an unſatisfying momentany Pleaſure: and will therefore tell you how unwiſe they are that give themſelves to Drunkenneſs, to Riot, and Uncleanneſs. Common Reaſon will tell you what a vain thing it is to Pride your ſelves in that which is not yours, or in that which ſoon may be anothers, (for all things here are ſubject to Time and Chance.) Common Reaſon

Reaſon will tell you what a madneſs it is to run into a Needleſs Quarrel, and then, as the faſhion is, to ſtake all you have upon the iſſue of it; to put it in the power of every worthleſs man to make you go to Croſs and Pile with him for your Life. Common Reaſon will tell you what a vexatious, endleſs thing it is to ſet your heart upon uncertain Riches; to live Poor, that you may die Rich; to wrong others, and be never the better for't your ſelf, but much the worſe, when all accounts are caſt up.

Theſe and many things more, common Reaſon will tell you, if you attentively heed it. You may learn much from Reaſon, and 'tis well if you do that; But let me tell you, Reaſon will not do this buſineſs in my Text. It will not convince you of all Sins, it cannot cope with all Luſts, it corrects but few Habits, and not any ſufficiently: for it does not purifie the Fountain, it cleanſes not the Heart; it does not place it upon God, the right Object; it does not ſeaſon it with Grace, the right Principle; without which all that you do otherwiſe is light and defective, 'twill not hold weight in the Scales of the Sanctuary of God. This it is which the Apoſtle ſuppoſes in this Work, ſaying, *If you through the Spirit mortifie the Deeds of the Fleſh*: You muſt:

muſt do it, but not you; you of your ſelves, ſo you cannot; but *you through the Spirit*, ſo you may, and ſo you ought to do it.

The Spirit in this Text is taken by Interpreters for either the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of Man; both theſe, in their ſeveral ways and degrees, have to do in the Work of Mortification.

Firſt Actively, onely the Spirit of God: and that either outwardly, by means; or inwardly, working on our Spirit.

Outwardly God has given us means of Mortification, both to them in whom it ſucceeds, and to them in whom it ſucceeds not: Thoſe Means are both his Word and his Works.

Firſt, Gods Word is generally propounded in Scripture, where whoſo reads and liſts to obſerve cannot but ſee how God forbids and diſſuades from all manner of Sin, how he invites and exhorts us to Repentance and Newneſs of Life. He cannot but ſee how God ſeconds his Commands with exceeding rich and precious Promiſes: He cannot but ſee how his Prohibitions are preſt with Threatnings of Judgments both in this Life and the future.

Of his Works: We have an account of *His Wonders of old*, in all the Hiſtorical Part of Scripture;

pture; of the Mercies which he ſhewed to them that did Repent, and of the Judgments which he executed upon hardened and impenitent Sinners. We cannot but ſee in our own daily Experience the Works of Gods ordinary Providence, both his Judgments and his Mercies in this Life. We ſee daily enough to convince us, if we pleaſe to obſerve, that as the Pſalmiſt ſays, *Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth* even here *in the Earth.*

Nay, if we collect from Experience, we need go no farther than our ſelves. We are forgetful and ungrateful, if we obſerve not in our ſelves that God has been merciful to us, that he has not taken us at advantage; that he has ſpar'd us when he might have puniſh'd us, and puniſh'd us Gently when he might have conſumed us: We cannot but ſee how he has forborn us, and warn'd us; how he has ſometime come near and threatned us, and as it were walk'd off to ſee what we would do: We cannot but ſee what he has done to others before our Eyes, how he has made quick work with them, and cut them off in his wrath; whilſt we have been the Objects of his Patience and Long-ſuffering, treated with all the Means, and invited with great Opportunities,

nities, (for what end?) to bring us to Repentance. If that be his end, as we are certain it is, where is the fault all this while, that You have not yet mortify'd the *Deeds of the Fleſh*, O ye that are *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins?*

What is it becauſe you are dead? So ſome may conceive; we being dead there is nothing for us to do; yes, there is much for you to do, much that you may do; ſo much, that as you cannot but confeſs 'tis your fault that you are ſpiritually dead, ſo it is ten thouſand times more your fault if you continue ſo.

For though you are ſo far dead that you cannot be rightly active, you are to be more than meerly paſſive in the Work of Mortification. I mean, you are not Stocks and Stones, you are not tied to a neceſſity of lying ſtill. Though you are ſo dead, that you cannot help your ſelves; you can do that which being done, God will aſſuredly help you. God will help you if you earneſtly apply your ſelves unto him; if you uſe thoſe Means which he has preſcribed; if you bewail that which has ſo deaded and diſabled you; if you earneſtly ſue to him for his Grace to enable you, and for his Mercy to ſpare you, ſo long time that this Work may yet be brought to Perfection.

Prayer

Prayer to God ſhould have the firſt place, if it has any in this matter; and that it has, St. *Peter* teaches in his Advice to *Simon Magus*, Acts viii. 22, 23. *Thou art* (ſays he) *in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and in the Bond of Iniquity; yet pray unto God, if perhaps thy Wickedneſs may be forgiven thee.* Doubtleſs a wicked mans Prayer is abomination to the Lord, while he reſolves to continue ſuch; but we are as ſure he can never be otherwiſe without daily and earneſt Prayer unto God.

But then Praying is not all, ye muſt alſo do what ye can. Ye can chooſe whether you will go to the Houſe of Prayer at Prayer-time; or whether you will ſit at home, or viſit, or walk the Fields: at home you can chooſe whether you will pray, or read a Book that may profit you; or whether you will do that which may hurt, or which cannot profit you. You can chooſe whether you will give your mind to what you read or hear; or whether you will divide it between Sleep and Talk, and other matters. You can, if you pleaſe, lay up what you learn; you can think of it again in due time, and ſo apply it, that it may make ſome impreſſion: I do not ſay you can have Faith when you pleaſe; but St. *Paul* ſays,

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God; and you may hear it when you pleaſe; and Gods Bleſſing is ready to go along with his Word, it is your own fault if you do not partake of that Bleſſing.

If you are ſick, and a Phyſician comes to you, and offers you that which he ſays, and you believe, will certainly cure you; if you take his Phyſick, and obſerve his Rules, and ſo doing recover your Health; it is he that has cur'd you, you have not cur'd your ſelf. And yet thus much you have done towards it, you have done all as he directed you, you have been willingly paſſive, which was more than he could compel you to be. Now this is all that God requires in the Work of our Converſion; He could compel us, but he will not; for he expects we ſhould be willingly paſſive: he would have us take his Phyſick, and obſerve his Rules. God expects we ſhould apply our Hearts to Spiritual Knowledge, with a full reſolution to live accordingly. God expects we ſhould abſtain from ill Diet, that is, from the ſatisfying of our Luſts, which (I have ſhown you) upon a Moral Account we are able to abſtain from, if we pleaſe. God expects we ſhould be converſant in his Word,

Word, and that we ſhould obſerve him in his Works.

For his Word, he expects you ſhould read or hear it often, and diligently; that what you read or hear, you ſhould lay to heart, ſo as to make ſome impreſſion; that you ſhould heed it with the ſame concernment, and with at leaſt as much effect, as you would do if your Lawyer ſhould tell you of ſomething which endanger'd your whole Eſtate; or if your Phyſician ſhould warn you of ſome Diſeaſe, that, if not prevented, would ſhorten your Life.

Of his Works, chiefly of his Judgments, God expects you ſhould be a diligent Obſerver.

Firſt, when you ſee others ſuffer for their ſins, which perhaps are alſo yours; You cannot but know that God has made them Examples to you: and therefore (whatſoever his end may be towards them) you have much cauſe to fear, that unleſs you repent, God will alſo make you (perhaps you next) an Example to others?

When any Judgment of God is fallen upon your ſelf, God expects you ſhould conſider whence it comes, and wherefore 'tis; *to take away your ſin:* that you ſhould mind this

eſpecially in Sickneſs, which is the greateſt Temporal Mercy, in order to a Spiritual good, the greateſt God can ſhow to any hardened and yet not incorrigible Sinner.

If ye neglect all theſe Methods and Means of Converſion, what remains but a ſad and fearful Account? An Account that comes Slow, but will be moſt Sure; Firſt for your Sin, and then for your Impenitence, and then for your neglect of the means of Repentance. This laſt will make you quite inexcuſable. When you are in Hell, whither you are going, and muſt come, without Repentance, it will be another Hell to you to conſider; how poſſible it was for you, by repenting in this Life, to have prevented that miſery which now you are for ever to endure; and to have obtain'd that Bliſs from which you are now ſeparated for ever.

Whereas contrary wiſe, if you lay hold on this Opportunity, if you make uſe of theſe Means, that uſe for which they were intended of God; you will ſoon find a ſenſible Benefit, in certain Effects which deſerve more time then I have now to conſider them.

Firſt, You will find the Means of Grace more effectual by degrees: You will find a Leſſon from *hence* make more impreſsion upon

on your thoughts: You will find both a ſoftning and a ſtrengthning of your Heart.

I dare promiſe you from God an encreaſe of the Means of Grace; and perhaps a longer Life to profit by them; Why not? For *God willeth not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he ſhould be converted, and live.* If longer Life therefore be needful to compleat your Converſion, God will give it: if not, he will the ſooner perfect your Converſion; for he has declared in favour of ſuch as you are, that *He will not quench the ſmoaking Flax, nor break the bruiſed Reed, until he has brought forth Judgment to Victory*, till he has given you a full Conqueſt of your Sins.

But how? *Through his Spirit:* That is, the inward Work of it; which comes next to be conſidered. God works outwardly, as you have heard, by giving us the Means of our Converſion. God works inwardly by his Grace, which gives efficacy to the Means; or more properly, he gives it to Us; to a Sinner ſo humbled, and ſo contrite, as ye have heard, for his own Promiſe, for his own Mercy's ſake, God gives that Grace which is the Life and Soul of Converſion.

And this being infus'd into our Spirits by the

the Spirit of God, may cauſe that Doubt among Interpreters, as ye have heard, (though it comes all to one) whether our mortifying of Sin be by the Spirit of God, or by our Spirit enlightened and enabled by his Spirit.

Sure enough the Agent or Efficient in our Converſion is the Spirit of God; Our Spirit, which is willingly Paſſive before and in our Converſion, after this becomes Active, it co-operates with the Spirit of God.

Firſt in our Converſion 'tis the work of Gods Spirit to mortifie our Luſts, to break the power of them in our Hearts, to ſet our captive and enthralled Affections at liberty.

'Tis the Work of God to change our Spirit or Rational Soul; having thus broken the Bonds of Death wherein it was held, to quicken it, to give it Spiritual Life: ſo to create in us, as it were, a New Heart, and a New Spirit; whence the Soul that repents is ſaid to be *a New Creature*, made as *Adam* was at firſt, after the Image of God. Both theſe Works of Gods Spirit St. *Paul* requires of us, though our part in them be onely ſuch as you have heard, *Epheſ.* iv. 22, *&c. That we put off, concerning the former Converſation, the Old Man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful*

ceitful Luſts; and be renewed in the Spirit of our Minds; and that we put on the New Man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and Holineſs.

Our Spirit being thus quickned and renewed, becomes Active, and hath its work upon all the inferiour Faculties, it beſtirs it ſelf to fill the room of thoſe Luſts which God has chas'd out of our Hearts; it changes the Work of every Part to an unſpeakable Advantage; it never reſts till it has the whole Body to offer up as *a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.* But its chief Work is on the Affections; which, while they were Servants to the *Fleſh*, commanded under it, and were the Inſtruments of its Tyranny over the whole Man; when God has ſet them at liberty, they are as able to fight on his ſide, and to make them as willing, that is the work of the Spirit.

Between God and the World St. *John* ſhews you the oppoſition, 1 *John* ii. 15, *&c. All that is in the World*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life:* As 'tis the buſineſs of our Luſts to engage our Affections to the World; ſo thoſe Luſts being mortified as you have heard, 'tis the work of a renewed Spirit to convert all thoſe Affections to God.

What

What is the Pride of Life, but an Affection to worldly Honour and Greatneſs? The Affection being mortify'd to that, the New Creature exalts to true Honour and Greatneſs: No ſuch Honour, no ſuch Greatneſs as this, to be the Child of God, and to bear the Image of God. To which Image Sin is ſo contrary, that it is only Reproachful, only worthy of our Scorn and our Diſdain. The Child of God aims at no other Glory, but that of God, which we advance; and that from God, which we are ſure to receive, by Well-doing.

The Luſt of the Fleſh is the Affection irregularly ſet on worldly and carnal Mirth and Pleaſure. The Affection being mortifi'd to that, is for Mirth and Pleaſure ſtill; but only ſuch as is worthy of a good Man, and of a true Child of God. If this Affection ever hated Melancholy before, 'tis more freed from it than ever, when converted to God: 'Tis entertain'd with the continual Feaſt of a good Conſcience, a Feaſt that conſiſts not of Meat and Drink, but of Righteouſneſs and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt: It has the Love of God, which is infinitely above the Love of Women: It has within it ſelf the matter of eternal Thankſgivings,

givings, and ſome Taſtings of thoſe Joys of the Bleſſed, whoſe work it is to Praiſe God for Evermore.

The Luſt of the Eyes is an Affection ſet either on Revenge, or on Covetouſneſs.

'Tis the buſineſs of Revenge to ſee ones Will upon his Enemies: The Affection being mortify'd to that, has its exerciſe ſtill, though it has no Enemies: For, as *Tertullian* ſays, *A Chriſtian is no Mans Enemy:* But he hates and declares againſt the Enemies of God; that is, not againſt Perſons, but Sins; againſt Atheiſm and Profaneſs, and whatſoever it be that diſhonours God, that affronts his Name, that diſgraces his Worſhip, that defaces his Image, Truth and Holineſs, the beſt Image of God amongſt Men.

And what is Covetouſneſs but an Affection irregularly ſet upon worldly Goods, ſtill craving and ſaving for an uncertain Future? The Affection being mortify'd to that, the renewed Spirit ſets before it a certain Future, a laſting Future, that is and will be the ſame to Eternity: the Affection cannot be too intent upon that, no Proviſion can be exceſſive for that, no Care can be too great to preſerve it, nor Watchfulneſs againſt him that

would rob us of it. There is but one that can rob us of it, that is, Sin; the Affection cannot be too watchful againſt Sin. There is but one Proviſion will do us good, that is, Good Works; the Affection cannot be too intent upon Good Works. O wiſe and happy Covetouſneſs of that true Riches which will neither be loſt nor left behind, but will follow us, and be with us for ever!

This then is True Mortification of the Deeds of the Fleſh: When a Sinner being Convinc'd of the Evil of his VVay, reflecting on his Guilt, and apprehending his Danger, ſeeing the Jaws of Deſtruction open before him; applies himſelf humbly to the Methods of God; abſtains from his Sin, takes all that God preſcribes, waits on God for the Effect, in Supplication and Prayer. God is pleaſed to give him the Conqueſt of his Luſts, ſets him free from the Bonds of Death, creates in him a New Heart and a New Spirit; which being purged from its Filth, finds a New Current for its Affections, ſets them wholly on things Spiritual and Eternal.

The

The Whole Man being thus transformed to the Image of God, in Goodneſs and Holineſs and Truth; He whoſe Eternal Delight is in theſe Lineaments of Himſelf, delights and dwells in that Man whom he has thus conſecrated to Himſelf by his Spirit.

What remains? but that it ſhould be our Care for the future not to Grieve that Good Spirit of God; but to Rejoyce him with Good Works, that we alſo may Rejoyce with him and in him; Enjoying that Bleſſed Eſtate of Spiritual Life here, Preparing and Waiting for the full Poſſeſſion of Eternal Life hereafter.

FINIS.

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